

CALLING ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Sri H. C. LINGA REDDY (Malur).—Sir, Under Rule 63 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Mysore Legislative Assembly, I call the attention of the Minister for Food to the unsatisfactory food situation in Malur Taluk and request him to make a statement thereon.

Sri B. D. JATTI (Minister for Food and Civil Supplies).—The hon. Member has stated that according to a report in the “Kannada Prabha” dated 21st February, 1968, the food situation is very unsatisfactory in Malur Taluk in Kolar District.

2. The allotment of foodgrains to the Kolar District has been maintained at the same level for the last several months, and there has been no particular reduction effected in recent months, except that no jowar could be given in January 1968, which has been made up to some extent by a special allotment of 85 quintals during February 1968. The Taluk has been receiving a reasonable share out of the District allotments. The average monthly allotments of foodgrains to the District (excluding the Mining area of the K. G. F., for which separate allotments were made) and to Malur Taluk during the months from November 1967 to February 1968, are indicated below:

(Figures in quintals)

	Rice	Wheat	Milo	Other food grains	Wheat products	Sugar
1 Allotment to Kolar District	2,939	2,266	4,750	1,745	1,762	1,652
2 Allotment to Malur Taluk	175	78	246	191	130	110

Except in the case of rice, foodgrains have been supplied in full in accordance with the allotments. It is hoped to continue the supply of foodgrains similarly in the future months also. The supply position of rice is always difficult, and it is not possible to give any assurance of maintaining any particular level of allotment. However, shortfalls in respect of rice are usually made up by making some other foodgrains available.

3. It may not be possible to raise the allotment of foodgrains either to Malur Taluk or to the Kolar District in view of the meagre allotment of foodgrains to the State by the Government of India, and

(SRI B. D. JATTI)

the limited quantities of foodgrains that are being procured by the State. Whenever possible, however, additional quantities of Milo, Jowar, or Bajra, Atta are even now being made available for utilisation on an *ad hoc* basis.

4. It should be remembered that even in the areas where Informal Rationing is introduced, we cannot meet the full requirements of the consumers. The issues from the Public Distribution system are meant only to supplement at a cheaper rate the open market availability so as to afford partial relief to the consumers and also to stabilise the prices in the open market.

5. The food situation in parts of Kolar District has not been satisfactory for the last few years, and the seasonal conditions during the current year also are not favourable. Portions of almost all the Taluks in the District have been affected by scarcity conditions in varying degrees. In the scarcity affected areas, the dry crops have been severely affected, and paddy crop has been raised only where lift irrigation facilities are available, as the tanks did not receive water. The food situation in the District has thus been difficult, but to the extent possible Government have been making foodgrains, particularly coarse grains, such as jowar, milo and bajra, available, in order to meet the essential needs of the vulnerable sections of the population. Moreover, the open-market availability has been fairly good and the latest information is that the prices of Ragi and Rice in the open-market have come down.

2.30. P.M

The difficulties faced by the poorer sections of the population are largely due to lack of purchasing power. A sizeable programme of relief works has, therefore, been undertaken in the affected parts of the District, to provide employment to the affected persons. An Emergency Feeding Programme, to provide a nutritious mid-day meal to children below 5 years of age, and to expectant and nursing mothers, has also been started, and will be continued until September 1968.

With regard to the poor quality of rice stated to have been supplied against cards in Malur Town, every effort is being made to insist on minimum standards of quality. However, any specific complaints in this regard may be brought to the notice of the local authorities so that some remedial action could be taken.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER.—There is another Calling Attention Motion by Sri M. S. Krishnan.

SRI M. S. KRISHNAN (Malleswaram).—Sir, I call the attention of the Minister for Animal Husbandry and Labour regarding the continuance of the strike since 15th January 1968 by the workers of Sonalkar Tool Works, Harihar.

Sri D. DEVARAJ URUS (Minister for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Information and Publicity).—Sir, the Harihar Taluk Small Scale Industries Employees Association, Harihar, issued a notice dated 10th January 1968 to the management of Sonalkar Tool Works, Harihar, protesting against the lay-off and stoppage of interim relief to the workers. This notice was followed up by a strike by the workers from 15th January 1968. The dispute was taken up in conciliation by the Labour Officer, Davangere. During conciliation, the management represented that serious recession has set in, in the Engineering Industry and that the same was explained to the workers two months earlier with the suggestions either to face retrenchment or lay-off or agree voluntarily to work for 5 days in a week. The workers agreed to work for 5 days in a week for two months. Since the position did not improve during that period, the management desired to continue the same arrangement, but the workers did not agree for the same. The management therefore carried on the work for one more month with 6 days work in a week. Since there was no improvement in the sale of goods and since the production also suffered in spite of 6 days' work in a week, the management decided to lay-off certain workers from 10th January 1968. The workers however agreed to have 5 days work in a week with one extra holiday without wages, but the management did not agree to this arrangement on account of accumulation of finished goods and fall in production.

As regards the discontinuance of interim relief, it was represented by the management that they had given certain advances to the workers which would be adjusted towards the interim relief to be paid to the workers during November and December, 1967. Further on account of financial difficulties due to recession, the management discontinued the payment of interim relief from 1st January 1968. The Conciliation Officer made efforts to bring a settlement, but it ended in failure. He therefore recommended to Government to refer the dispute for adjudication. Government accepting the recommendation of the Labour Officer and the Commissioner of Labour, referred on 24th February 1968 the two issues, viz., lay-off of the workers and stoppage of interim relief for adjudication to the Labour Court, Hubli. Orders were also issued to prohibit the continuance of the strike by the workers on 24th February 1968. It has now been reported that the strike by the workers has been called off and the workers have resumed duty from 1st March 1968 and further that the labour situation in the factory is normal.

Members' Representation

Sri H. SIDDAVEERAPPA (Harihar).—Sir, yesterday I brought to your notice after your finding was given by way of a ruling as to the behaviour of a member of the Upper House, Sri Nadgouda, casting aspersions with regard to the members of this House. I then requested